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LETTER DATED 18 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR concerning the launching of missiles by Iraq against Israel, on 18 January.

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yuliy VORONTSOV

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READEX FICHE

Annex

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR concerning the launching of missiles by Iraq against Israel

During the night of 17 to 18 January, Iraq launched missiles on sections of Tel Aviv, Haifa and some other Israeli urban centres.

There is absolutely no doubt that the aim of this operation was to try to convert the problem of Kuwait into a regional conflict and to make the war spread like a conflagration to the Middle East as a whole.

The Soviet Union has always taken a firm and unambiguous stand against such a development, particularly in the course of its contacts with the Iraqi authorities. We are convinced that it is impossible to resolve one problem by creating another and that it would be dangerous, above all for the peoples of the region itself, if this conflict were to develop into another, even wider and more complex conflict.

At this critical juncture, we make another appeal to the Iraqi authorities to show that they are realistic and understand that their actions, beginning with the occupation of Kuwait, can bring only death and destruction to the Iraqi people and further misfortune to the region as a whole. The leaders of the Arab States cannot fail to understand this, responsible as they are for the well-being of their people. We hope that the Arabs will not let themselves be dominated by their emotions and will not take part in plans aimed at unleashing a new military confrontation with Israel.

In the Soviet Union, we also certainly hope that, for its part, the Israeli Government will show the necessary restraint and not embark on a path that would result in still greater tension in the Middle East.

Once again, the Soviet Union takes a firm stand in favour of a settlement of the problem of Kuwait on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and in favour of the earliest possible break in the stalemate in other situations of conflict in the Middle East. The peoples of the region must, finally, be able to enjoy peace and live in tranquillity.